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FM AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4414
INFO RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0770
RUEHSV/AMEMBASSY SUVA 0139
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 0172
RHMFISS/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 1782

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT MORESBY 000169

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FOR EAP/ANP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/18/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [INR](#) [CASC](#) [BP](#)
SUBJECT: POLITICAL RIOT IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

REF: REF A.) PORT MORESBY 162 B.) PORT MORESBY 154

CLASSIFIED BY: Robert Fitts, Ambassador, AMB, STATE.
REASON: 1.4 (b)

1. (U) Summary: A riot has been instigated in Honiara by the losing side following the selection of a new prime minister. Youths have burned vehicles around parliament and have moved into the downtown area, attempting to trash businesses with Taiwanese affiliations. Police are now moving in. We have no reports of injuries as yet. Embassy is alerting the American community through our warden system. End Summary.

2. (SBU) On April 18, the newly elected Solomon Islands parliament voted in a coalition government with Snyder Rini, a former DPM, as Prime Minister. One of the losers with pretensions to the top job, Charles Dausebea, reacted angrily. His supporters reportedly stoned a car bearing the new Prime Minister and began burning vehicles, including police vehicles around Parliament. They then moved downtown and began attacking Chinese businesses affiliated with Taiwan.

3. (C) Dausebea (ref B) was a leader of a militia that ousted an earlier government and touched off ethnic violence that brought Solomon Island government to a standstill and eventually led to a large-scale Australian led police assistance mission (RAMSI). For those actions, Dausebea is permanently barred from the U.S. The coalition which emerged from the election is a reformulation of the earlier government and has long received quiet assistance from Taiwan. We have reports that Beijing had provided assistance to Dausebea, presumably as a route to overturning Solomon Islands' recognition of Taiwan.

4. (SBU) As of 1700 local time (0500 GMT) police were moving in to control the situation. Observers noted that there were still numerous fires from burning cars in the area of Parliament with occasional explosions as gas tanks burst. We have had no reports of injuries or of affected Americans. Post is coordinating with the Department to issue an immediate warden notice.

5. (C) COMMENT: The police force has been rebuilt and reinforced with several hundred Australian/New Zealand officers under RAMSI. Though the situation seems fluid, our contacts expect that the situation will shortly be brought under control. Embassy will monitor the situation and report developments.

6. (C) Ethnic tensions and political rivalries have been largely quiescent since the July 2003 arrival of RAMSI. Though RAMSI has been hugely supported by the populace, some politicians do not welcome the perceived interference. Dausebea openly campaigned to lessen RAMSI's role. With three ministers from the former government now in jail or facing charges, RAMSI may now have to contend with an erosion of support from the political elite.

FITTS